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FLOOR DEBATE

January 30, 2001 LB 166

2006 there will be 6 percent withheld; 2007, 8 percent; and every year thereafter. This amounts to three million dollars the first year, six the second, nine, and then thirteen in 2008. If Nebraska enacts a law by October 1 of this year, then we will be eligible for a share of \$3.5 million in incentive funds. If we don't enact the law by October 1st, we lose that share. We all know someone who has had a family member killed or has been hurt by a drunken driver and, in fact, on this floor, we have two senators who have been affected. There might be more. One senator lost a sister who was a young mother. Another senator has a family relative who is paralyzed. Opponents of the bill will argue that .08 affects social drinkers; that it targets social drinkers; that it doesn't deal with the truly dangerous people out there on the road. What we need to get off the road, they will say, are the .15s. Well, of course we want to get them off the road. They are the most dangerous. But if you are impaired at .08 you need to be off the road, as well. Granted, we all know that LB 166 is not a cure-all for drunk driving. No legislation is. But, nevertheless, it is a step in the right direction. Based upon statistics which we've seen from other states, there is no doubt that a .08 law will cause a reduction in traffic fatalities in Nebraska. It may not be overwhelming, but it will certainly be better than nothing, which is what we have if we maintain the current law. And, in fact, if you look at some of the handouts that I've given you, the numbers are rising. One final aspect of...of LB 166 is that...the fact that motorboats are also included in this new lower BAC level. There are some that think, for whatever reason, that a .08 should not apply to boats. I have a problem with that. If we don't want people driving under the influence on our roads, we certainly do not want them on the waterways.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: One minute.

SENATOR HUDKINS: Finally, this bill is not aimed at drinking. If you don't want to curtail your drinking, get a designated driver. That's easy. You may want to buy your alcohol and drink it at home. If you eat a meal with your drinking, it takes longer to reach that critical level. So I'm...I'm just telling you, this is a law that will save lives, and that's what we are all here to do. Thank you, Mr. President.